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THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

A SENIOR THESIS

SUBMITTED TO DR. B. C. HOLTZCLAW

AS A PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

of the

REQUIREMENTS

for a

MAJOR in PHILOSOPHY

By

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INTRODUCTION

The problem presented in this paper is one that was first brought emphatically to my mind on a Wednesday night, four years ago. The pastor of a Baptist Church was discoursing upon the foreknowledge of God. "God knows everything we are going to do", he said, "but does not in any way interfere with our actions." It started me upon a long train of thought as to the relation between God and the free will and hence, between God and evil. The discussion that follows is the outcome of my research.

The Problem of Evil

I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the
lame.

I was a father to the poor: and the cause which
I knew not I searched out.

And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked
the spoil out of his teeth.

- - - - -

But now they that are younger than I have me in
derision,

Whose fathers I would have disdained to have set
with the dogs of my flock.

Job 29:15-17

Job 30:1

The outcry of Job has been upon the lips of men since man first began to reason about the problems of the universe. Why is it, if God be beneficent, that the wicked prosper and the good suffer misfortune? How can a good God allow so much undeserved unhappiness in the world that He has created? On all hands we see injustice go unpunished and righteousness unrewarded. There seems to be too much evil for it to be but a means toward good. The world is full of those who are so overwhelmed by cares and suffering that they seem to have not the least of power to fight a conquering battle. Can an all-

powerful God be guiding such a universe?

In answer to the question, some have been driven to the opinion that the world is but the product of aimless forces. Others have sacrificed their logical reason for the sake of clinging to a traditional religion. Still others have faced the problem squarely, and from them, perhaps, may be gleaned a glimpse of the truth. But even the greatest minds of our world, having directed their magnificent facilities toward the problem, at the very moment when they are ready to shout, "eureka", wonder, if, after all they are not still far from the truth.

The existence of evil is no special problem for people on the lowest levels of culture. The animism of early man adequately explains his world. For him there are good spirits and there are evil spirits. The good is the work of the former, evil the contribution of the latter. And with this explanation the primitive is satisfied. His only problem is to get the spirits on his side and so avoid the unhappiness that would otherwise come upon him.

Between primitive man's ideas and the reflective thought of civilized philosophy are many stages of development. The early Greeks composed theogonies, legends and myths, to explain questions that arose. Sometimes evil was said to come by the will of the gods; at other times it was said to be partly due to man and partly to the ill will of the gods, as

in the stories of Homer. The later Greek philosophers talked of dualism as a settlement. The early philosophers of Christian times tended to make the settlement of the problem a simple matter by ascribing it all to God. The thinkers of today seem to be closer to the truth than ever before. Their solution is the product of a more accurate weighing of the facts and tends to avoid the bias of early Christian thought.

"The impact of science and learning upon the modern mind places the problem of evil in a different setting. But a problem remains, nevertheless, and it is an extremely difficult one for religion and philosophy ---. Just in proportion as God is regarded as the spiritual world ground, the disposer and determiner of all, and at the same time is held to be all-wise, all-powerful, and all-righteous, to that extent does the meaning of evil in the world become more puzzling. To the extent that the world is regarded as rational, an orderly whole, a purposive and end-realizing process, to that degree is evil an enigma." (1)

Thus, we see that the problem lies before all of us who have as our philosophy of life a well grounded religious outlook. No religion has a real value to offer to life unless it can give an explanation of evil and a way of viewing it. The worth of religion can well be determined by the answer

(1) Gamertsfelder & Evans, Fundamentals of Philosophy.
p.637.

it gives to the problem of evil. It would not be well for a man to be an adherent of Christianity and ignore the great stumbling block of all faiths. The great religions of the world may be defined as a quest--a searching after an explanation of life as we see it. And there is a no more searching problem in all the world than the existence of evil and suffering in the lives of men.

Among philosophers there is no uniformity in naming the various kinds of evil. But we will be safe in classifying them according to four groups--pain, error, ugliness and sin. A further division may be made into two classes, which is the general procedure--natural evil (pain or suffering) and moral evil (sin). It is not difficult to see that the two groups will include the first four classifications.

Natural evil includes all such, "anti-values", as bodily pain, disease, death, earthquakes, floods, fires, famines and pestilences. There indeed seems to be a law in nature that the fittest shall survive. Tennyson's words seem to express well one side of the realm of nature when he says it is, "red in tooth and claw with ravin'". In the animal world each creature must be constantly on guard lest he lose his life to some strange foe. Once his guard is lowered, disaster enters in. John Stuart Mill ably describes nature's scenes:

"In sober truth, nearly all of the things for which men

are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another, are nature's everyday performances. Killing, the most criminal act recognized by human laws, nature does once to every being that lives. ----- Next to taking life - - - is taking the means by which we live; and nature does this on the largest scale and with the most callous indifference." (2)

In the human order we find natural evil is even worse, for in some respects an animal is more fortunate than man. If a starfish is cut into bits, each part will become a new animal, complete in every detail. If a man loses a finger, it is gone forever. Again, the animal is more fortunate in that he has a shorter time span. His memory of the past cannot be as tinged with anguish as that of man, and he does not see far enough into the future to be so utterly miserable when frustrated. Man's sense of right, his higher cultural and spiritual self, unite in increasing the agony of his existence when affairs go contrary to his liking. "To the animal there can be no protracted pulling of heartstrings because of the prolonged suffering and distress of those close by family ties; there can be no sense of bereavement, no burdening weight of anxiety for those afflicted with imbecility, idiocy or insanity. These experiences are reserved for man with his capacity for happiness and sorrow." (3)

(2) Mill, J.S., Three Essays on Religion, pp. 28-30.

(3) Gamertsfelder & Evans, Fundamentals of Philosophy, p. 642.

There are times when nature seems to go in for a wholesale destruction of life. Without warning, a mighty tidal wave will engulf a whole city. Floods take the lives of many. Fires break out at unexpected moments and thousands perish, along with them going the cherished hopes of countless innocent souls. Earthquakes shake the earth with their terrific vibration and take their toll of life. Destructive winds carry before them the wrecked ambitions of struggling humanity. Where in all their turmoil can be found a sense of order or a law of justice?

The most difficult part of the whole problem is the lack of any fair distribution. It seems that neither evil nor good is distributed according to equality or worth. In spite of the fact that there are some men who think that there is an, "exact connection between suffering and sin, or between a man's misfortune and his character",⁽⁴⁾ one can easily see that this is not the truth. To those who say that each man's misfortune is due to his own sin, the, Book of Job, speaks once and for all in condemnation.

Job's comforters assured him that the suffering that was his was undoubtedly due to some secret sin that he had committed. The thing for him to do was to cleanse his heart and once more he would come into prosperity. But the good man bared his soul before God in his purity; and God's vindication of his stand showed conclusively that the suffering of Job

(4) Whale, The Christian Answer to the Problem of Evil, P. 33.

was undeserved.

"Job's voice is the voice of Everyman, appealing to experience against their all-to-easy formula. The view that God antecedently wills the lightning stroke, shipwreck, cancer, cannot save itself, especially in a scientific age. It is a matter of scientific observation that

'Streams will not curb their pride

The just man not to entomb;

Nor lightnings go aside

To give his virtues room:

Nor is that wind less rough that blows

a good man's barge.'" (4)

By the stand I am taking I do not mean that God never rewards the good for his goodness in this world; I simply mean that the distribution is far from even. I could not believe in prayer if I did not believe that God can interfere with the laws of nature at special intervals to help His servants--and He does.

The other classification according to which we have arranged the kinds of evil is moral evil. If it seems that natural evil is bad, moral evil is even more destructive. As we read our newspaper we can see the unhappiness and suffering that comes into the world because of sin. On every hand we

(4) Whale, The Christian Answer to the Problem of Evil, p. 33.

find robbery and murder, lying, cheating, bootlegging, adultery and sexual crimes of unmentionable character, oppression and false witnessing. We discover human beings used as mere tools for some wealthy money-mad oppressor who cares nothing at all about their welfare as long as his dividends increase. And, so we have our slums. We find our world war-minded and ready to spring into forceful action because of the sinful selfishness of a comparatively few men who lead their people.

Among individuals we find a man with wonderful possibilities a slave to drink, wrecking his home. We see the son of a godly mother breaking her sainted heart by his wayward sinfulness. Men and women who have sworn to be true to each other until death go into divorce courts at the least notice and for trivial reasons. The world goes madly after bursting bubbles of pleasure and wild parties and insanely allow the best there is in human nature to be snuffed out by starvation. Where in all this moral chaos can be found order and reason? How can the most devoted religionist believe a just God made man of such a nature? This is the problem of moral evil.

In the discussion that has gone before, the distinction between natural evil and moral evil was made more absolute than perhaps it really is. Many evils are of a mixed character, belonging to both classes, such as famine, disease and poverty.

"Though man is not responsible for the cholera germ, he

is often responsible for cholera; but for his selfishness and inhumanity, his vices and stupidities, cholera could be very largely eliminated. In one sense an outbreak of plague which kills a thousand people in a week is as much as physical evil as the tornado which annihilates a township in half a minute; both are disasters which come out of the blue, as it were" (5)

We now have seen in what territory our problem lies. And it is a problem that demands, by its very nature, that it be approached from a number of angles in order to approximate a complete answer. It is a question so perplexing that the first inclination on our part is to give up all speculation and rely upon our faith in God; but that is not being true to our own inward rational nature. The problem must be approached at its very core. And in order to do this we must first see the opinions that others have reached in reference to the question.

There is a great diversity of opinion among the world's thinkers, as we can readily see. A study of the problem of evil can be so easily tinged with emotion, and the findings so affected by the character of the student that usually the result is more of a revelation of the personality of the writer than of the truth aimed at.

There are two definite attitudes toward the proportion of evil and good in the world and the prospect of man

(5) Whale, The Christian Answer to the Problem of Evil, p. 32.

in the universe. On one hand we have pessimism, which sees the amount of evil outweighing the amount of good and, therefore, finds in life more pain than pleasure; and on the other hand, optimism which looks at life and finds, "it is good". It will be an interesting study to notice how temperament and environment influenced the attitude of different men in respect to evil. Our discussion will, first of all, deal with those who look at life through dark glasses--the pessimists.

The pessimists' attitude is as old as the ancient Hindus or the early Hebrews. In the literature of the Old Testament, we have interesting examples of those soured on life. Where can we find a darker picture than in the Book of Ecclesiastes? It is the story of a man who had seen all of life and had found it vain and devoid of lasting happiness:

"I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:

I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits:

I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house;

I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces:

And whatsoever my eyes desired I kept not from them.

Then I looked on all the works that my hand had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was

vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."

- - Ecclesiastes 2:4-12

Undoubtedly the pessimism of this writer is due to the inevitable boredom that comes from a life of constant seeking after pleasure and material things. Thus, becomes the attitude of all who follow his path; they, too, come to say:

"The day of death is better than the day of one's birth."

The climate and temperature of India has a great influence upon the attitude of its people toward life. The torrid sun beats unmercifully upon the overpopulated societies of men, many who are born to be cursed and "untouched" by men of higher castes. Life holds no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow for such a people. Instead it becomes a burden to be borne and an unhappiness to free oneself from. All mankind is upon a wheel--the merciless wheel of life--Man's goal is to free himself from this wheel and finally achieve the supreme happiness of ceasing to be reborn.

It remained for one, Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, to give a ^{more} exact formulation of their attitude. We find it in his four noble truths:

"All existence involves suffering.

All suffering is caused by indulging in inherently insatiable desires.

Therefore, all suffering will cease upon the suppressing

of all desires.

However, while still living, every person should live moderately, in accordance with the noble Eightfold Path of right belief, aspiration, speech, action, livelihood, endeavor, thought and concentration."

-- Sacred Books of the East

The goal of man is to reach Nirvana, a state of passionless peace in which we cease to be in this life of unhappiness and sorrow. The sense of relief that Buddha showed when he attained this wisdom is apparent:

"As soon as my knowledge and insight were quite clear regarding each of these four noble truths, then did I become certain that I had attained to the full insight of that wisdom which is unsurpassed in the heavens or on the earth. Immovable is the emancipation of my heart. This is my last existence. There will be no rebirth for me."

In more modern times there appeared a scholar who shared the attitude of Buddha. Arthur Schopenhauer, affected profoundly by unfavorable social, religious and economic conditions of his day, attributed reality to blind will and saw in life a constant suffering and evil:

"This, his (man's) existence, even when we consider only its formal side, is a constant hurrying of the present into the dead past, a constant dying. But if we look at it from the physical side, it is clear that, as our walking is ad-

mittedly merely a constantly prevented falling, the life of our body is only a constantly prevented dying, an ever-postponed death: finally, in the same way the activity of our mind is constantly deferred ennui. - - - - -

"We saw that the inner being of unconscious nature is a constant striving without end and without rest. And this appears to us much more distinctly when we consider the nature of brutes and man. Willing and striving is its whole being, which may be very well compared to an unquenchable thirst. But the basis of all willing is need, deficiency, and pain. Consequently, the nature of brutes and man is subject to pain, originally and through its very beings. If, on the other hand, it lacks objects of desire, because it is at once deprived of them by a too easy satisfaction, a terrible void and ennui comes over it - - - - -. This has also had to express itself very oddly in this way; after man had transformed all pain and torments to hell, there then remained nothing over for heaven but ennui. - - - - -. The life of the great majority is only a constant struggle for existence itself, with the certainty of losing it at last. But what enables them to endure this wearisome battle is not so much the love of life as the fear of death, which yet stands in the background as inevitable, and may come upon them at any moment. Life itself is a sea, full of rocks and whirlpools, which man avoids with the greatest care and solicitude, although he knows

that even if he succeeds in getting through with all his efforts and skill, he yet by doing so comes nearer at every step to the greatest, total, inevitable, and irremediable shipwreck, death; nay even steers right upon it: this is the final goal of the laborious voyage, and worse for him than all the rocks from which he has escaped.

"Now it is well worth observing that, on the one hand, the suffering and misery of life may easily increase to such an extent that death itself in the flight from which the whole of life consists, becomes desirable, and we hasten toward it voluntarily; and again, on the other hand, that as soon as want and suffering permit rest to a man, ennui is at once so near that he necessarily requires diversion." (6)

In conclusion he sums up:

"But whatever nature and fortune may have done, whoever a man may be and whatever he may possess, the pain which is essential to life cannot be thrown off. The ceaseless efforts to banish suffering accomplish no more than to make it change its form. It is essentially deficiency, want, care for the maintenance of life. If we succeed, which is very difficult, in removing pain in this form, it immediately assumes a thousand others, varying according to age and circumstances, such as lust, passionate love, jealousy, envy, hatred, anxiety, ambition,

(6) Rand, The Classical Moralists. pp. 611-613.

covetousness, sickness etc." (7)

To this gloomy picture Von Hartmann adds his bit. He was a follower of Schopenhauer, believing that existence is essentially evil, proceeding from the blindness of spirit and not from intelligence. "A purely rational principle would not have created at all." (8)

It is blind will which has brought us into existence. Since the world and evil is here, the best that unconscious reason can do is to produce conscious minds and develop them until they can undo evil by the cessation of will. Thus, Hartmann claims he gives more meaning to existence than Schopenhauer; yet, I wonder if he does as he goes on to say that our duty is not to contrive a private salvation, but to join with the side of reason, realizing existence to be evil and that the hope of attainment of happiness by civilized society is vain. We must join with reason that we may aid in overcoming blind will; and thus through a cessation of will will come non-existence once more and hence, peace. Thus, the best we can do now is to avoid the illusion of life that brings more intense sorrow, and help others to see the truth. The hope for all civilization is extinction.

Among the French philosophers, I was particularly struck

(7) Ibid., p. 615.

(8) Perry, Philosophy of the Recent Past, p. 96.

with Voltaire. Even after a long study I cannot see that he is a pure pessimist, although he is labeled as such. In a certain sense he is, but I find him more of an agnostic than a pessimist. Perhaps it is his undoubtedly fierce dislike of the purely optimistic philosophy of his time that has won him his place among the wearers of dark glasses. That, perchance, we shall see later.

Early in his life, Voltaire was without doubt an incurable optimist. Evil and sorrow offered no problems for him, for in everything he saw a good God working out everything for the best. Yet, as his life progressed, God, nature and man seemed to be in league to cast his optimism upon the rocks. Voltaire's life was just one long struggle against ignorance, greed, cruelty and injustice. The bigotry of the leaders of the church turned him against all organized religion. And so in his poem on the Lisbon earthquake he finally cast his optimism to the winds and defied the believers in Divine Providence, definitely placing himself on the side of pessimism. Where do we find a more despairing picture than:

"Philosophes trompés qui criez: 'Tout est bien,'
Accourez, contemplez ces ruines affreuses,
Ces débris, ces lambeaux, ces cendres malheureuses,
Ces femmes, ces enfans, l'un sur l'autre entassés,
Sous ces marbres rompus ces membres dispersés;
Cent mille infortunes qui la tème dévore,

Qui sanglans, déchirés et palpitans encore,
Entemés sous leus toits, terminent sans secours
Dans l'honneur des tourmens leurs lamentables
jours!"?

How could shallow optimism explain such a disaster? Is it because of its sins Lisbon is destroyed?

"'Dieu s'est vengé, leur mort est le prix de leurs crimes!'" Then why is Paris and London not destroyed also? Such questions he continues to ask until he is finally driven in his despair of finding the truth to say:

"Je suis comme un docteur: hélas! je ne sais rien."

Upon such optimists as continued to believe, "tout est bien", and that this is the best of all possible worlds, Voltaire turned his keen wit in, "Candide". The young hero, Candide, wanders throughout the world seeking his happiness in what his philosopher friend calls "the best of all possible worlds." Misfortune after misfortune falls upon him, and in spite of saying to himself at times:

"Si c'est ici le meilleur des mondes possibles, que sont donc les autres?"

he continues on his journey for proof of his optimistic philosophy. Again and again he finds only unhappiness, and in a moment of discouragement says:

"l'optimisme est la rage de soutenir que tout est bien quand on est mal".

Yet he continued upon his search, believing, in spite of all the evidence against it, in his cherished premise; until he finally decided to make the best of the mess he found life to be, his optimism gradually dying out for lack of food. He settles down and his friend, the optimistic philosopher says to him:

"Tous les événemens sont enchaînés dans le meilleur des mondes possibles: car enfin, si vous n'aviez pas été chassé d'un beau chateau à grands coups de pied dans le derrière pour l'amour de Mlle Cunegonde, si vous n'aviez pas couru l'Amerique à pied, si vous n'aviez pas donné un bon coup d'épée au baron, si vous n'aviez pas perdu tous vos moutons du bon pays Eldorado, vous ne mangeriez pas ici des cédrats confits et des pistaches."

Candide answers simply, "Cela est bien dit, mais il faut cultiver notre jardin."

And that is Voltaire's answer. Losing faith in God and agnostic about needs of the truth accepted by his world, he nevertheless, never lost faith in honest work. His advice was to work without trying to reason; that is the only way to make life endurable.

In Italy it is the youth, Giacomo Leopardi, who voices the pessimistic attitude. And like Voltaire, he was not in the beginning the holder of such a view of life. Born in 1798, he showed great promise from the very first.

"A devouring zeal for learning possessed the lad; in four

months he learned Greek by himself, and then, in addition to his Latin and French, English, Spanish and Hebrew so that he could argue with the Hebraists of Ancona. His brother Carlo, waking at midnight, would see him on his knees before his little table, pouring over folios as big as himself. He read, he translated, wrote commentaries, collations, sermons, and orations, verses in classical manner, a poem on the Earthly Paradise, an epic in three cantos on the Three Wise Men, translations from Horace, a tragedy of his own, "Pompey in Egypt". He required a catalogue of his works, beginning with 1809 when he was eleven! Three years later he began a History of Astronomy, to contain all doctrines, philosophical and mathematical. He wrote Latin commentaries on Greek authors, collected fragments of second century Church Fathers, wrote an essay, "On the Popular Errors of the Ancients", translated Homer's "Batra-Comiomachia", attempted the Odyssey." (9)

As the great treasures of the world's knowledge began to open before the boy's eyes, his heart leaped within him over the magnificent vistas that lay before him. He dreamed of the future and lived in a fairyland. But sad to say, nature will allow a man to go only so far. The mental pursuits are too often followed at the cost of bodily health. And so it was with young Leopardi.

(9) Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil. p. 216.

"While the boy was learnedly mastering obscure folios, his bones were degenerating, his spine was being curved beyond redemption, his eyesight ruined. There emerged from the Leopardi library a hunchback with an emaciated face, protruding cheekbones, a dilated mouth, complexion earthy and ugly: a rude jest of matter at the expense of mind." (10)

A parent's care he never had, although he had a mother and father by name; no one was there to teach him a balance of life. Too late he saw himself on the way to his grave, with his life hardly begun, life that had promised so much. But his health was only the beginning of his misfortune. Disaster after disaster came upon him until he turned against the universe.

"Naught is worthy

Thine agonies, earth merits not thy sighing.

Mere bitterness and tedium

Is life, naught else; the world is dust and
ashes!

Now rest thee. For the last time

Abandon hope. Fate to our kind hath given

No boon but death. Now scorn thyself, scorn
nature,

Scorn the brute Power whose reign

(10) Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil. P. 217.

We know but by our woes, which are its pastime;

Scorn all that is, for all is vain, vain, vain." (11)

In, Zibaldoni, there is the awful passage: "All is evil. That is, all which exists is evil; that all things exist, is an evil".

Undoubtedly it is Leopardi's belief that non-existence is better than this life. No greater blessing can we have than to die gently. Even the existence of unconscious plants and flowers is one of woe. "Enter a garden of plants, herbs, flowers. Be it as flourishing as you please. Be it in the best season of the year. You can't turn your eyes in any direction without finding suffering - - - - -. This rose is hurt by the sun which has given it life; it shrivels, languishes, withers - - - -. Ants have infested this tree, grubs the other, flies, slugs - - - - -. The gardener goes wisely breaking, cutting live branches." (12)

In what a different world we find ourselves when we began to examine the pictures painted by the optimists! And with the sombre views of Leopardi we bid adieu to the summary of pessimistic philosophy and come into the more pleasing climate of those who view life through rose-colored glasses. Yet, even optimism can become depressing if it is too much emphasized, as we can easily see by reading the following comic strip:

(11) Ibid. p. 233.

(12) Ibid. p. 235.



The attitude of the optimist whom we admire and who helps to bring sunshine into troubled lives cannot be expressed in a better way than it was by Pippa in, Browning's "Pippa Passes":

"The years at the spring
And days at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled,
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn.
God's in his heaven--
All's right with the world!"

That a person is an optimist doesn't necessarily mean at all that he is living a superficial life--it is no indication that such a person has failed to look life squarely in the face; for many a man has risen above untold suffering to an optimistic outlook. In the case of Pippa we might not expect a girl such as she to be of such an optimistic nature. She

was a poor child who worked all the year round, except for one day, at the silk mills in Asolo, in Northern Italy.

But we cannot help but suspect a touch of superficiality in the writings of a number of outstanding optimists. I do not feel exactly comfortable when reading from the works of Pope, who was an outstanding contender for optimism. In his, "Essay on Man", he gives his attitude. We are not to try to reconcile the presence of evil in the world with the benevolence of God but,

"Know thyself, presume not God to scan;

The proper study of mankind is man."

Even the anti-social lives of wicked men have their place in the divine plan:

"Who knows but He, whose hand the lightning forms,

Who heaves old ocean, or who wings the storms,

Pours fierce ambition in a Caesar's mind,

Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?"

Since nobody knows, we must believe,

"All nature is but art unknown to thee,

All chance, direction which thou canst not see

All discord, harmony not understood

All partial evil, universal good;

And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,

One truth is clear, whatever is, is right."

In his philosophical theory, Leibnitz approached close to the conception of Pope. He warns against the tendency to exaggerate the evils in life. The pleasures in life far exceed the pain; and concerning virtue and vice we mostly find mediocrity rather than iniquity. If we look at the facts of life in their proper perspective we will see that evil is rather the exception and not the rule. "I am not astonished that men are sometimes sick, but - - - I am astonished that they are sick so occasionally, and that they are not always ill." (13)

Natural evil and moral evil are both due to the imperfection of all finite existence. "The ultimate origin of evil must not be sought in the divine will, but in the original imperfection of creatures, which is contained ideally in the eternal truths constituting the internal object of the divine intellect, so that evil could not be excluded from the best possible system of things." (14)

Now just what was the logical method by which Leibnitz arrived at the above conclusions? We must first examine the fundamental doctrines of his system. He put forward a new concept, the monad. This monad is psychical in nature. All existence is in this form, the ultimate is the monad that is often arranged in patterns with others. These monads differ in degree of consciousness and sensitivity until you reach the creative

(13) Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil. p. 104.

(14) Ibid. p. 106.

and supreme monad, God. In his, "Essais de Theodiceé", he reasons upon this basis: If all the beings in the world were perfect there would be no world at all; and the finite must be imperfect and limited. God could not create without giving things limitations. The monads on the human level are finite and imperfect and, therefore, have confused ideas. There had to be sin and error. Therefore, evil follows from the very idea of creation, the very idea of the world. We can imagine an infinite number of worlds, each having some evil in it or the possibility of evil, but some having more than others. God being absolutely good and wise, of course, has chosen to create a world with as few evils as possible. Thus we live in the, "best of all possible worlds".

The evil that is here serves as a setting for beauty and good. It works as a spur to achieve goodness. It strengthens character and disciplines the soul. And so in the end it is good.

The optimistic attitude of Leibnitz can be well seen in the last paragraph of his, "Monadology".

"Finally, under this perfect government, (City of God) there will be no good action unrewarded, no bad action unpunished; and everything must result in the well-being of the good, that is, of those who are not disaffected in this great State, who, after having done their duty, trust in providence, and who love and imitate, as is meet, the author of all good, pleasing themselves with the contemplation of his perfection, according to the nature of truly pure love, which takes pleasure in the happiness of the

beloved. This is what causes wise and virtuous persons to work at all which seems conformable to the divine will, presumptive or antecedent, and nevertheless to content themselves with that which God in reality brings to pass by his secret, consequent and decisive will, recognizing that if we could sufficiently comprehend the order of the universe, we should find that it surpasses all the wishes of the wisest, and that it is impossible to render it better than it is, not only for all in general, but also for ourselves in particular, if we are attached, as we should be, to the author of all, not only as to the architect and efficient cause of our being, but also as to our master and final cause, who ought to be the whole aim of our will, and who, alone, can make our happiness." (15)

A study of optimism would not be complete without those thinkers, who, pessimistic about the world as it is, nevertheless, believe in the ultimate good of human nature and who are optimistic, therefore, in the sense that they are confident that if men should change some of their ways, eternal happiness would be achieved. In such a category belongs Rousseau. With civilization as it is, he had no sympathy and no hope. His complaint is that of Diogenes; he searches Paris in vain for a real man, only finding empty shells of men. What civilization has done to men has been to rob them of genuineness and primitive freedom and has enslaved and corrupted the minds of men. The evils of society

(15) Leibnitz, Philosophical Works. p. 323.

can be arranged by their sources:

"The first source of all evil is inequality: from inequality sprang riches--from riches, luxury and idleness. From luxury came the fine arts, and from idleness, science." (16)

That is his pessimism. He is classed as an optimist because of what follows. He believes that man's fundamental impulses are good. Social problems have turned him toward evil. Let him turn back to a life of simplicity--to the life of the primitive savage and there he will find his happiness. Humans are born to be happy; civilization has enslaved them. Joy and peace will come to those who follow the way God has planned--the simple path of nature and primitive equality.

It is interesting to note that the great Chinese philosopher, Confucius, closely parallels many of the ideas of Rousseau. He, too, believed that human nature is fundamentally good and so viewed it optimistically. "The tendency of man's nature is good. There are none but have their tendency to good." (17) By lack of knowledge and mishandling of social problems states have brought unrest and unhappiness among their people. Let the rulers set a good example before their people and the state will be peaceful and happy. He, himself, once said that given three years as a ruler his state would become devoid of evil and unhappiness. Since human nature is good, the solution to the problem

(16) Tsanoff, The Nature of Evil. p. 155.

(17) Hume, The World's Living Religions. p. 119.

is that men have knowledge of what is true and right. Knowing the truth, they will follow it faithfully. And the truth is to be found in the wisdom of the ancients.

The optimism of Confucius as illustrated in his equation of, knowledge = virtue, is seen by one of his famous sayings:

"The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the empire first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their own thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension# of knowledge lays in the investigation of things.

"Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their States were rightly governed. Their States being rightly governed, the whole empire was made tranquil and happy." (18)

(18) Sacred Books of the East. p. 357.

The attitude of the Pantheist is usually optimistic, but of course, the various thinkers have different conceptions and can said to be optimistic in several senses of the word. The ancient Hindus were of the pantheistic belief, but have been considered pessimistic. Indeed they are, if we view them in their attitude toward life as men commonly find it. All human effort toward success is vain. But once a man comes into union with Brahma, his outlook is indeed optimistic. Let us examine their religion more minutely.

The fundamental conception is God or Brahma. Brahma is the impersonal soul of all things, of which all other things are parts. Brahma is the only fundamental, eternal reality. All else is illusion. The aim in life is to realize that Brahma is, "thine own true self", to become one with eternal reality. Brahmanism is optimistic in that it believes the universe to be spiritual, rational, good. Matter is illusion, as is self-hood. All is one in Brahma. Bliss awaits the man who realizes this.

In Brahmanism there is no distinction whatsoever between what is right and what is wrong. There is none between good and evil:

"Such a one, verily, the thought does not torment! "Why have I not done the good?" "Why have I done the evil?" He who knows this, saves himself from both these thoughts. For truly, from both of these he saves himself,--he who knows this. This

is the Upanishad mystic doctrine." (19)

In more modern writers we still find the pantheistic conception of the illusion of evil, but never so pronounced. Spinoza and Bradley approach it. Spinoza claims, as Royce remarks, "that there is one good thing, and that is the Infinite; there is one wisdom, and that is to know God; - - - -. Sin is merely foolishness; insight is the only virtue; evil is nothing positive, but merely deprivation of good; there is nothing to lament in human affairs except the foolishness itself of lamentation. The wise man transcends lamentation; ceases to love finite things, ceases therefore to long and to be weary, ceases to strive and to grow faint, offers no foolish service to God as a gift of his own, but possesses his own soul in knowing God, - - - -." (20)

Bradley is one of the most original thinkers of recent times. He begins his philosophy by trying to prove, and succeeds quite well, that most of our conceptions are inconsistent. These are "appearances" in our minds and give little clue as to the ultimate nature of reality. He ends in a doctrine of the absolute. This Absolute must be self-consistent; it must contain all appearances but in a transmuted form; it must be one; it is sentient experience. We can never see or fully understand the nature of the Absolute, yet some things give a better clue than

(19) Hume, World's Living Religions. pp. 25-26.

(20) Royce, Spirit of Modern Philosophy. pp. 54-55.

others. From this introduction we can imagine how Bradley deals with the problem of evil.

He begins by saying that, "error and evil are facts", (21) and then takes it all back, in essence. Evil is of three classes, he claims, pain, failure to realize end, and immorality. He treats each one separately. Admitting that pain exists for us, he claims that it disappears in the higher unity as it is transmuted into the Absolute. "It will exist, but will have ceased to be pain when considered on the whole." (22) We have evidence of this neutralization of pain in human experience. My condition may be pleasant on the whole although I have a local pain. The smaller pains are swallowed up on the large pleasures.

Bradley treats the failure to realize ends in much the same way. "The ends which fail, we may reply, are ends selected by ourselves and selected more or less erroneously. They are too partial, as we have taken them, and, if included in a large end to which they are relative, they cease to be failures." (23)

In the matter of moral evil we find that there is a conflict within us of the good and evil wills. But morality is dependent upon this conflict. The evil will results in the good in the end. The collision within the self is an element in some fuller realization. "For the content, willed as evil and in opposition to the good, can enter as an element into a wider arrangement.

(21) Bradley, F. H., Appearance and Reality. p. 430.

(22) Ibid. p. 198.

(23) Ibid. p. 200.

Evil - - - is overruled and subserves. It is enlisted and it plays a part in a higher good end, and in this sense, unknowingly is good. - - - - as before with physical evil, the discord as such disappears, if the harmony is made wide enough." (24)

Bradley sums up his attitude by saying:

"For religion all is the perfect expression of a supreme will, and all things therefore are good. Everything imperfect and evil, the conscious bad will itself, is taken up into and subserves this absolute end. Both goodness and badness are therefore good. - - - - - They are good alike but on the other hand they are not good equally. That which is evil is transmuted and, as such, is destroyed, while the good in various degrees can still preserve its own character." (25)

It remained for, Josiah Royce, to advance a more acceptable idea of evil and its place in the universe. God for Royce is Absolute mind. We are all parts of Him. "God experiences the Universe in time as we do, and is immanent within us, in fact; and also He experiences it eternally as a completed whole. His experience of it in its eternal completeness and perfection could not occur if it were not for the fact that He also experiences its succession in time in ourselves and the other finite minds of the universe. In fact, His mind is constituted by the finite

(24) Ibid. p. 202.

(25) Ibid. p. 440.

minds of the universe, and yet is a complete whole - - - - - (26)

Thus, all reality is closely bound together and inter-related within the Absolute Mind. This has a profound effect upon Royce's idea of evil. He first discusses human suffering:

"I admit at once that man's selfhood is bound by the most manifold ties to the life of universal Nature. In consequence, man constantly has fortunes that have no definite relations to his own conscious ideals. Man echoes, in his passing experiences of good and of ill, the fortunes, the interests, and the ideals of vast realms of other conscious and finite life, whose dissatisfactions become, as it were, per accidens, part of each individual man's life, even when the man concerned cannot himself, at present, see how or why his own ideals, or what he takes to be his own concerns, are directly such as to make these dissatisfactions his fate. And this is true, first, in so far as man, the social being, echoes the joys and sorrows of his fellow-men, without regard to whether he consciously knows how these joys and sorrows stand related to his own ideal interests. But this echoing of other finite life than ours extends, secondly, - - - to all those relations with the life of nature - - - ." (27)

Although much of suffering is our own fault, a great deal of it is due to the fact that all the universe is interrelated and shares the burden of sorrow and pain. Every action ends in affecting all the rest of the whole. It is often impossible

(26) Wright, Students' Philosophy of Religion. p. 390.

(27) Royce, World and the Individual. pp. 383-384.

for us to know why we are suffering, but it is due to this close connection of all reality. But God does not look upon suffering from a distance. When we suffer, He does, too, for we are all a part of Him. It is our task to help God in removing the evil and suffering from the finite world.

But why is there suffering and evil in the world? First, of all, because it grows out of the very nature of our finite consciousness. Our reach exceeds our grasp; we aim for more than we actually reach, and unhappiness results. We should find comfort in the fact that the tribulation of the finite soul is God's means toward the overcoming of the world and the eternal order. This leads us to Royce's idea of the place of evil in the universe. Wright puts it in the following manner:

"Just as there have to be strident notes in a symphony to make possible its harmony as a whole, so there must be evil in the world, both physical and moral, in order that it may be overcome in the universal harmony. Without evil, the good could not triumph." (28)

Royce insists upon moral responsibility and makes a sharp distinction between right and wrong. The good life is approved by God, the evil life eternally reprobated. Yet in the end the evil life is turned into good by the Absolute. A man may fail to do his part in overcoming evil, but God will still bring about by another the part the wrongdoer left undone. All

(28) Wright, Student's Philosophy of Religion. p. 390

the evil in finite lives leads to good in the Infinite Order.

"All finite life is a struggle with evil. Yet from the final point of view the Whole is good. The Temporal Order contains at no one moment anything that can satisfy. Yet the Eternal Order is perfect. We have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Yet in just our life, viewed in its entirety, the glory of God is completely manifest." (29)

We should rejoice, "to share the world's grave glories and to take part in its divine sorrows,--sure that these sorrows are the means of eternal triumph, and that these glories are the treasures of the house of God. When once this comfort comes home to us, we can run and not be weary, and walk and not faint. For our temporal life is the very expression of the eternal triumph". (30)

In addition to the optimistic group of thinkers there is another group which takes the via media, the meliorists. The meliorist sees all the evils of the pessimist but also reckons with the assurance and hope of the optimist. For him the world is in evolution. In the midst of the evolving world is a finite God who is striving to realize harmony. Man's object is to cooperate and aid the efforts of God. Some believe that the good will eventually conquer, others are agnostic, but

(29) Royce, World and the Individual. p. 379.

(30) Ibid., p. 411.

all of them hope for the victory which is assured if man does his part. Some are dualistic, others believe God to be limited by his own nature and possibilities.

Modern thinkers may think that they have discovered a new idea of God in this respect. But in one of the early religions we find this same idea advanced. Zoroastrianism can truly be called a melioristic philosophy. In this religion there is one deity to be worshipped above all, the power of light and life, and goodness, Ahura Mazda. Ahura Mazda is, "creator, all-seeing, all-knowing, most mighty, friendly, father of justice, father of good mind, beneficent, bountiful". (31)

Opposed to Ahura Mazda, is Ahriman, the spirit of evil, or the devil. A constant war is being waged between the two, each one limiting the other. Not until the end of the world shall one conquer. To Ahura Mazda will finally go the victory. Everyone who helps to develop husbandry and does honest work is helping the spirit of light to overcome.

"He who sows most corn, grass, and fruit, sows righteousness; he makes the religion of Mazda walk - - -." (32)

Among the modern thinkers, John Stuart Mill is outstanding. The natural world has been put here and is to be overcome. It reveals the finite and limited nature of God. The government

(31) Hume, World's Living Religions. p. 203.

(32) Ibid., p. 208.

of Nature in no way resembles the work of one who is good and omnipotent.

Therefore, "The only admissable moral theory of Creation is that the Principle of Good cannot at once and altogether subdue the powers of evil, either physical or moral; could not place mankind in a world free from the necessity of an incessant struggle with the maleficent powers, or make them always victorious in that struggle, but could and did make them capable of carrying on the fight with vigor and with progressively increasing success. Of all the religious explanations of the order of nature, this alone is neither contradictory to itself, ~~not~~ to the facts for which it attempts to account." (33)

He goes on to add, "It may be possible to believe with Plato that perfect goodness, limited and thwarted in every direction by the intractableness of the material, has done this because it could do no better. But that the same perfectly wise and good Being had absolute power over the material, and made it, by voluntary choice, what it is; to admit this might have been supposed impossible to any one who has the simplest notions of moral good and evil." (34)

William James, was greatly influenced by the attitude of J. S. Mill. He also believed that God must be finite. This is

(33) Mill, Three Essays on Religion. p. 39.

(34) Mill, Three Essays on Religion. p. 41.

a pluralistic universe we live in (James doesn't stop with dualism) and, "the superhuman consciousness (God), however vast it may be, has itself an external environment, and consequently is finite." (35)

Evil is here in the world; it is a terrible fact. We cannot explain it away by calling it appearance or illusion. The presence of evil here in our world cannot be explained unless we consider God finite in power or knowledge. The Spirit of Good is constantly warring against evil, and we have hope that He will overcome, especially if we aid in the struggle.

"God himself, in short, may draw vital strength and increase of very being from our fidelity. For my own part, I do not know what the sweat and blood and tragedy of this life mean, if they mean anything short of this. If this life be not a real fight, in which something is eternally gained for the universe by success, it is no better than a game of private theatricals from which one may withdraw at will. But it feels like a real fight,--as if there were something really wild in the universe which we, with all our idealities and faithfulness, are needed to redeem; and first of all to redeem our own hearts from atheisms and fears. For such a half-wild, half-saved universe our nature is adapted." (36)

(35) James, A Pluralistic Universe. pp. 310-311.

(36) James, The Will to Believe. p. 61.

L. T. Hobhouse, although he believes in a finite God, nevertheless objects to James' picture of Him as an external God. There is purpose running throughout the world. There must be a Mind of which this world-purpose is the object. But this Mind is not Absolute nor Omnipotent Creator, nor is it Omnipotent Providence. Evil exists in the universe. The amount of evil is, "the measure of the incompleteness of the order actually achieved by Mind in the world". (37) Mind is ever seeking to conquer the other forces of the universe. Physical evil is the result of blind forces not yet overcome. Moral evil is due to the partial ends of individuals which they pursue independent of the effect upon others. All these evils are gradually being conquered by the advance of humanity, in which God is "incarnated". (38)

"Progress is made only in so far as the conditions of life come more and more under the dominion of Mind. There is nothing in the scheme of organic evolution to determine that the higher type should prevail except the inherent strength of the type itself. On the other side of the account let us bear in mind that there is no evidence of any permanent force working against the higher type, as such, or singling it out, as it were, for destruction. Evil is not a positive force. There is no real Ahriman that strives with Ormuzd [Ahura Mazda].

(37) Hobhouse, L. T., Morals In Evolution.

(38) Wright, Students' Philosophy of Religion. p. 386.

Evil is merely the automatic result of the inorganic. Physical evil results from the impact on the spiritual order of natural courses which intelligence has not been able to subordinate to its ends, moral evil from the clashing of purpose in the minds which have not been brought into an organic unity." (39)

There follows a most interesting philosophy of history:

"Hence the working of that retributive principle in history whereby whatever is evil, being inorganic, conflicts with itself, and perishes by 'its inherent badness', while the elements of goodness, of rational harmony, in the long run support and further one another, and this upon the whole at an accelerating rate in proportion as they have already acquired organic union. Here is that internal inherent strength on which the spiritual order depends for its ultimate victory." (40)

Dean Hastings Rashdall was another believer in a limited God. God is alone eternal. All other things are brought into existence by Him. Thus, God has willed and is responsible for the world as we know it. There is so much evil in the world that it could not have been created for its own sake by a good and rational Being. So our present world must have been willed as a means to a future end. All possibilities are known to God and He willed our world as the best that seems possible to Him. God cannot be limited by his Goodness, so it must be by His Power.

(39) Hobhouse, Morals in Evolution. Vol. II, p. 281.

(40) Ibid.

Rashdall expresses his attitude as follows:

" I find the answer - - - in the theory which - - - must be described as the union in one and the same Being of absolute Goodness with limited Power. Inasmuch as the limitation of Power springs not from outside but from within, we may continue to speak of God as the Infinite - - - -. The point of the theory which I advocate is that God causes bad souls to appear as a means to the ultimate good, a good which is unattainable without them. The bad is willed, or - - - - permitted by God as a means to a greater good, without on that account ceasing to be really bad. A better Universe is imaginable, but a better universe is not possible, because nothing is really possible but what is or will be actual. [I question this]. If we say that God might possibly have created a worse world than that which He has created or does create, we can mean only that, if we looked only to His Power and not to His Goodness, we should see no reason why the world should not be worse than it is; and, if we say that God might possibly have created a better world than ours, we mean that, if we looked only to His Goodness, and not to His Knowledge and His Power, we should see no reason why the world should not be better than it is." (41)

Now this is close to the optimism of Leibnitz, but emphasizes much more the limitations of God. Therefore, I have

(41) Rashdall, The Theory of Good and Evil. Vol. II, p.341.

included it under the heading of those who follow the via media.

Christian theology has had a number of different attitudes during its history. Although it has often been pessimistic about this life, it has always kept the hope for better things to come. Without a doubt, Christ was an optimist about the outcome of good in the world, although he saw the reality of evil. Evil ought^{not} to be here. I can class Christianity, therefore, as neither pure optimism nor pure pessimism. Thus, I save a consideration of it until last.

Some of the Christian thinkers have tended to sacrifice reason in order to keep their conceptions of the Omnipotence and Omniscience of God. They, therefore, say that God is the author of, and wills both good and evil. They follow the writer who says:

"I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create the darkness. I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things."

Isaiah 45:6,7

Just as an earlier writer says an evil spirit, "from the Lord", came upon King Saul to drive him wild, these Christian thinkers believe that all that happens, whether good or evil, is the will of God and comes from Him. Such is the Calvinistic doctrine. Says Calvin: "I inquire again, how it came to pass that the fall of Adam, independent of any remedy, should involve so many nations with their infant children in

eternal death, but because such was the will of God - - -. It is an awful decree, I confess; but no one can deny that God foreknew the future final fate of man before He created him, and that He did foreknow it because it was appointed by His own decree." (42)

His logic pushes him further. We deserve punishment because of our sin. But if we ask if God hasn't made us corrupt, he answers that the ~~father~~ ^{potter} has power over the vessel. All law and all justice come from God, so he can do no injustice. If He determined the fall of man, it was because he foreknew that it would in the end glorify His name. In order for us to understand the justice of God, we must realize that He constitutes justice as it suits Him. Thus, ethical conceptions, as we know them, don't apply to God. And so God is His own law and we have no right to question his justice. We must simply accept his commands. He places, "upon God the final responsibility for all that exists in this world and all that man does therein, and all that in consequence man shall enjoy or suffer hereafter". (43) All our actions and life is rigidly foreordained by God.

I sympathize more fully with the attitude of our earlier philosopher, St. Augustine. Far from him was any attempt to make God responsible for evil of any kind. He begins by denying

(42) Hobhouse, Morals in Evolution. Vol. II, p. 134.

(43) Hobhouse, Morals in Evolution. p. 134.

the reality of evil. It has no positive existence. It is only a, "privation of good" (cum omnino natura nulla sit malum nomenque hoc non sit nisi privationes boni. (44))

Evil has come into the world because of the choice of free individuals---God is not the cause of evil choice or the evil will. There is nothing that causes the evil will (malae autem voluntates efficiens est nihil (44)). The evil will itself is nothing positive, but is merely a defective will.

In another sense Augustine treats evil as shadows in a picture that make the whole more beautiful. "Evil is not good, black is not white, but it is good that evil is." It seems to me that this idea of evil does not exactly fit into the privation theory that he believed in fundamentally. It seems to be more of a reality here.

Man was created free to sin or not to sin in Adam. Adam, of his own free will chose to disobey God and brought destruction upon the whole human race. Professor Thilly remarks concerning his doctrine:

"The first man transmitted his sinful nature, and the punishment necessarily connected with it, to his offspring, for he represented the whole human race. And now it is impossible for man not to sin. - - - -: he went into sin free and came out of it unfree. Adam's sin is not merely the beginning and example of sin, it is original, hereditary sin. The result is

(44) St. Augustine, De Civitate Dei. p. 491.

(44) Ibid. p. 519.

that the entire human race stands condemned, and no one will be saved from merited punishment except by the mercy and unmerited grace of God." (45)

Augustine has many problems that are difficult to answer. Among them is, "How could a just God require generations of innocent men to suffer for the sin of Adam?" If he answered that they are not innocent but sinful by original sin, we may ask, "Why did God make humanity so that those who are not party to crime should become guilty through no fault of their own, but by heredity?" You might as well blame a child for being born blind.

In the pages that are to follow it shall be my attempt to give a consistent Christian approach to the problem of evil as I see it. I realize that logically it may never be solved. We can only do the best we can in the light of our knowledge. As I approach the discussion I cannot help but feel my insufficiency and bow my head in reverence to those who have gone before me--to those who have died as martyrs in their struggle to rid the world of evil itself and eventually the whole problem. I feel as did Moses when he viewed the burning bush as the Lord said to him:

"put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground".

In the beginning God created all the universe. There is
(45) Thilly, History of Philosophy. pp. 153-154.

nothing that is which is not His Creation. Out of nothing He created a real universe of which we are a part. He himself, not in space and time, created a world that is. The world has a beginning and will have an end. God is continually creating, as Augustine stated. Therefore, the world is in evolution. God did not just thunder out, "Let there be a universe", and it ~~was~~ there all at once. A great deal of the creation of God is yet to come. It is the plan of God that His universe shall grow and develop. He is present in it today, guiding its evolution.

In a consistent system of philosophy, that is, one consistent with life as it really is, pure pessimism must be rejected, although we must admit with the pessimist that evil is a reality, his final conclusions are faulty. I doubt very much if the pains in life are greater than the pleasures, and don't believe any man can prove that they are. The pessimist is an exception among men rather than a rule. Not many men do you find wanting to cease living. In spite of all its sorrows and pain, life is good--that is the testimony of thousands of souls. Only a small proportion of men ever want to or actually do commit suicide. They may talk about their sorrows and "hard times" and say they want to die, but they fight against death with all their strength. I am reminded of a little colored boy who had been mistreated. He announced that he was going to kill himself, since nobody wanted him. A kindly friend did nothing but reach for his gun and pointed it at the lad, telling him to get ready to die.

Down on his knees the negro went, begging for mercy.

The fundamental principle upon which the pessimistic philosophy is based neglects one side of reality. The claim is that since man cannot ever realize his desires, and desire keeps arising, he remains at all times miserable and frustrated. They keep in mind only the end and the frequent failure to reach it, but fail to observe that the greatest pleasures in life come not in the reaching of ends, but in the pursuit and the joy of struggle. The true athlete is the one who plays for the sheer love of the game and not merely to win. In the competition and vigor of battle is found his joy. And this joy is available for all men. We can't all win, but we can all strive and gain that happiness that comes in knowing that we have fought a good fight, win or lose. Of course, if a man loses continually, his happiness and joy in the battle diminishes, but few indeed are those who always lose. In the battle of life we are often defeated in one direction but then find victory in other fields, perhaps smaller, but nevertheless a triumph that brings the pleasure of achievement.

The pessimistic attitude is based upon the theory of ethical Hedonism, which states that pleasure is the greatest value in life. Therefore, if a man is suffering, there can be little value found there. But it seems to me that the highest value in life is character, moral character. All other things; even pleasure, you have, but you are a moral character. There-

fore, even if a man suffers, and it helps to build a character, as it often does, it is valuable. Virtue is usually followed by happiness, but is the supreme value whether your own happiness follows or not. The good it does your moral self justifies this attitude.

I am more in sympathy with pure optimism, but I cannot go with it to the extent that it denies the reality of evil and tends to regard the pain and suffering of life as illusion or appearance. Indeed this world is not all we might desire. There are many things present, without which, the world would be better. The evil that we find here is not the will of God. He sent His Son that it might be overcome and destroyed. So contrary to the optimistic attitude, we must admit the reality of evil in the world.

That evil has been created by God, I deny. I cannot possibly see how the Principle of God could do evil or create it "that good might result." Evil is the opposite of good and has no part in Divine Goodness. Then the question arises, "How did evil get here? Do you not believe that God created all things?" The only answer that can be given to this is the answer of St. Augustine. Evil has not been created. It is the result of free will. But that discussion must come later under the heading of moral evil.

Pantheism does not in any way settle the problem of evil. In fact this problem is its greatest stumbling block. If all

things are a part of God and God = Nature, what meaning is there in talking of ethics or evil or moral responsibility? It is not I who act, but God acting through me. If I do wrong, it cannot be my fault; it is God acting through me and by me. There can be no use in my striving to overcome, I am rigidly determined by the All-inclusive Absolute. Of course, the Pantheists do not conclude this, but it logically follows from their first premise.

Thus, Theism offers the nearest approach to a solution of the problem. But before it lies many problems that are not easily settled. These will be discussed in the remaining part of this paper. It must be assumed from the beginning that God is not finite in the sense that He is limited in power by anything external to Him. I can see no reason for doubting the Authority of the Scriptures and conceiving of a God who is limited from outside, when an Omnipotent God is just as consistent with reality. This is what it shall be my attempt to show.

First of all, we must deal with the problem of natural evil. Part of the solution to this problem is bound up in the fact that this is an evolutionary world, which not being perfect, is yet striving toward that goal. Indeed I cannot see where there is anything in nature that is evil in itself. There seems to be, rather, in the words of Augustine, "A privation of good in natural things." All are good, but some are higher goods than

others. These lower goods are often considered evil, but they are not evil in themselves. It is when you compare them with a higher good that they appear such. If creation stopped with any of the lower goods, that we often call evil, they would no doubt be called good, for they would be the best known. Yes, the natural world is good, a series of higher and lower goods. The evolutionary process strives toward perfection. Perfection would have no meaning if there were not lower forms which were not perfect. In this striving in nature for perfection we see Good, for indeed we find it brings to light the most admirable of traits in those beings born in the Natural world--courage, bravery, strength, progress. This world is no climate for procrastinators and lazy creatures. Wherever life becomes easy, we find either degeneration or stagnation. The torrid zones illustrate this. In the temperate zones man has a constant struggle with the forces of nature, and his reward has been strength of character and progress toward a better world. God never intended that His creatures should stagnate or degenerate. He put them into an evolutionary world that would make them strong--a "vale of soul-making", as Keats puts it. The evolving world is necessary for moral growth and strength. To the strongest and most versatile go the victory. Thus, we see that in nature there is a constant striving toward perfection, that there is nothing evil in itself, but a series of lower and higher goods. In the words of Shakespeare:

"There is some soul of goodness in things evil
Would men observingly distil it out.

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"For naught is vile that on the earth doth live
But to the earth some special good doth give." (46)

The objection will be raised that indeed some so-called evils are but means toward moral growth, but are not many of the sorrows and pains that come from natural causes superfluous? It follows, therefore, that we must observe that order is the first essential of a moral world. If our environment were a chaos instead of made up of a relatively consistent order, we wouldn't know what to expect next. It would be snowing in the middle of July; thunder would accompany a snow storm. We might suddenly see a tree flying gracefully away in the breeze, or the earth turning to water. In order to plan for the future, as is necessary in moral growth, there must be a relative amount of order in nature. Suppose there were no law of gravitation. We couldn't build houses or walk comfortably down the street. If water is to contain all the elements that are necessary in quenching our thirst, it must be such that a man who falls into or is enveloped by it, must drown. There cannot be assigned to an element now one characteristic and then another. It will be argued that God is limited, therefore; and I will admit that He is, if it is agreed that being con-

(46) Quoted in Gamertsfelder and Evans, Fundamentals of Philosophy. p. 659.

sistent is limitation. Even in God, there are laws in His own nature that determine His action.

"What do we mean by omnipotence? Does it mean power to determine arbitrarily what shall be possible? Almost all philosophers answer, No. God cannot do what is in itself absurd; make a false statement true, for example; make virtue vice or a circle square; He cannot cause anything to exist and not to exist at the same time; He cannot destroy himself." (47)

To me it would seem absurd that God should be expected to create a moral world in which there was no order. These great laws of the Universe remain constant, and whenever man defies them or gets in their way, he suffers. It is due to this reason that we have earthquakes and floods and tornadoes. They all can be explained in terms of the natural working of physical laws that are necessarily here. In spite of all the suffering that results, we cannot fail to see, and we who believe in immortality more especially, since we do not believe life is over at death, that there is a soul of good in such disasters. The great earthquake of San Francisco was a great tragedy, but it resulted in a newer and finer city. "fearful natural catastrophes are seen to have an ultimately beneficent meaning, forcing men to embark on new and hazardous enterprises, and bringing out of pain and tears qualities and achievements of the human spirit which could not, apparently, have emerged

(47) Whale, The Christian Answer to the Problem of Evil.

otherwise. Look at the perfect build and balance of fishing--boats in which brave men go to sea far up in the north; not for nothing has that functional perfection been secured; there is human life in every line. The people who sit at ease in the floating palace of a luxury line are debtors----to the immemorial tradition of a seafaring race, to sailors, to craftsmen, brave and lonely heroes innumerable who have hazarded and given life through uncounted generations." (48)

Indeed there seems to be a law of the universe that, "no cross, no crown", I fear that someone might think that I am treating natural evils in too light a vein, that I do not treat with fair consideration the lives eaten up by disease and disaster. But let the hospitals of the world speak for themselves. Suffering does make a man more noble. Often it leads to even greater accomplishments. God would never remove Paul's "thorn in the flesh". He could serve better that way. Many a singer has never made a success until her heart has been broken. Thus she could touch the heartstrings of others. This is the way of the Cross.

What of moral evil? How did it get here? Men through the ages have been asking this question and perhaps it will never be answered. We can only approach it according to our knowledge.

I take the traditional stand and say that God is not responsible for moral evil. It is due to freedom of the will.

(48) Whale, Christian Answer to the Problem of Evil. p.42.

And there must be free will if morality has any meaning. We must be free to choose between, not good or evil, but according to my former hypothesis, between lower and higher goods. Therefore, I assert that God made us free beings. It is out of the very nature of free will that evil has resulted. But the question comes, "Why didn't God make man without free will and thus avoid the evil that resulted? Some would prefer that they be made automatons. Of such is Thomas Huxley:

"if some great power would agree to make me always think what is true and do what is right on condition of being turned into a clock-----I should instantly close with the author." (49)

But most of us would not prefer such a machine-like existence; there would be no such thing as right; our whole life would be the outcome of rigid necessity. Even if it led to pain and sorrow I would prefer a life rich in discovery and growth through the functioning of a free will. I would say with Lessing:

"If God had concealed in his right hand all truth, and in his left only the over eager impulse after the truth, and said to me; 'choose!' I should reverently take his left hand and say: 'Father, give unto me!'" (50)

That men have a free will is a higher good than if they were automatons. With free will comes moral character and and growth and freshness. With mechanical existence could come

(49) Gamertsfelder and Evans, Fundamentals of Philosophy. p.667.

(50) Obid.,p. 668.

only an automatic life devoid of purpose and joy of achievement.

The free will, I say then, is responsible for moral evil. But did not God make man so that He would choose evil; and is He thus not to blame for it? The answer to this question we shall see. God did not make man with a propensity toward evil. He made him with a fifty-fifty chance of choosing the higher over the lower. God provided for man the raw materials. He could do what he wished with what he had to work with. And none of his materials were evil in themselves. Some were a higher good than others. Would man choose the higher or the lower? Only the future would tell. God created man with only the possibility of sinning (choosing the lower good). Without this possibility there could be no free will. That evil should actually come was not God's plan or desire. He created man with only the possibility of sinning. But, the objections come, did not God see that man was going to sin, and if He did see it, was He not responsible? If He didn't foresee it, are not you saying that God is not omniscient?

As I view free will, it is not possible even for God to know finally and absolutely what man's final choices will be. For such knowledge would eventually lead to predestination. If predestination is true, there is no such thing as free will. We are just pawns in the hands of a chess player--Fate. It is not difficult to see how the foreknowledge of God conflicts with free will. Suppose God knows our decisions before we made them. If we do otherwise than what God knows, He will have been mis-

taken. But God cannot make a mistake, for He is omnipotent and omniscient. Therefore, the individual will do what God knows he will. If God doesn't plan the individuals fate, something has already worked it out and causes the individual to follow certain paths necessarily. The observation must come from the individual, therefore, that since God knows what I am going to do before I do it, what's the use of my trying to do right. If God knows I'm going to do right I will anyway, and if He knows I'll do wrong, so I will do. Morality and free will become meaningless.

Accordingly, I cannot believe that God has foreknowledge of the free choices of free wills. And it was so with the first man. God didn't know whether he would choose the lower or the higher good. He only knew the possibilities. Still I believe that God is omniscient, but instead of defining this characteristic as "knowing everything", I would define it as "knowing all that it is possible to know". God could have made men so that he could have foretold their choices, but He gave them free-will, a higher creation. Bestowing free-will, He voluntarily gave up all knowledge of what the ultimate choices of these free beings would be. He knew only that there was the possibility of either a good or an evil choice. Upon the power of God there is no limit from the outside, except what He wills to limit it. At one word Almighty God could blast away the whole universe and man with it. The love of God leads Him to direct sinful man toward the light,

not by coercion, but love; allowing him full responsibility for his actions.

But what of original sin? Are children born in sin forever condemned unless they are baptized? That does not follow. When man first chose the lower good (and this choice is sin, missing the mark, as the Greeks expressed it) he tipped the scales of free will. Once having sinned, he was influenced by the psychological law of habit and the next sin was easier. The more and longer man sinned the harder it was for him to choose rightly. His choices influenced others, and led them into sin.

Each child is born into the world as innocent and free from sin as was Adam. The social makeup of our world, which has been sinning for so long, makes it much easier for the young child to do what is wrong than what is right. Thus, everyone finds that the struggle to do right is harder than going the way of evil. It is quite possible to imagine a society in which it is more difficult to do wrong than right. But that would be heaven.

Early in his life the individual learns to be selfish and look out for himself. The sin that is committed later is all rooted and grounded in that one word--selfishness. If the world could teach to its young and show by its example the unselfish life we would find moral evil diminishing. But the power of sin is too deeprooted in the world. It has gotten its grip upon humanity. Early in life does the child learn the ways of the world, early it is influenced to go the way of the lesser good ,

until sin is gripping at its very soul. Thus, there is no person who has come into life and hasn't sinned, saved One. By the time we reach the age when we are really responsible for our actions the things we don't want to do we do, the things we know we should do we leave undone. There seems to be no cure for this tendency that the field of Philosophy can give.

The choice of the lower good on the part of the individual cannot always be blamed on the influence of society. In many senses the life of the child parallels the life of the first man, Adam. First there is the Age of Innocence in which the child is free to choose. And for some strange reason, not always by environmental influence, the child tips the scale and chooses a lower good. So the process of the race is lived again in the life of each individual. It is not necessary that child choose the evil--One did not. But all the rest have. Why, we do not know. Perhaps the law of chance, perhaps not. We only know that it is not God's will that one should be lost and of course it cannot be His plan.

Evil is present in the universe as sin. It is wrong for man to sin because it hurts his own self, preventing the full development of His personality, it harms other people, it separates him from God. But in spite of its wrongness, man continues to sin, often because of ignorance of the consequences. But he is responsible for his ignorance. He should know more.

In conclusion, may I observe that the final solution to the

problem of evil is not to be found in the realm of philosophical Theology. It is found in the field of experience. Evil can be overcome, but the victory comes only through the way of sorrow and suffering. In the end the solution is a mystical one--that through the suffering and triumph of One, many should share in the victory.

No man was ever wronged as was Jesus Christ. No man ever bore his griefs more heroically and faithfully. He drank the cup of sorrow that was full to the brim. He tried to bring sunshine and hope into the lives of men, and as a reward received a crown of thorns and the death of a criminal. The greatest of Friends came to the hour of death with only a few weeping women beneath His cross. Dark was that hour. It seemed that all the forces of evil were gathered together to take its vengeance upon this lonely courageous soul. The power of moral sinfulness was reaping its reward. The very ones He came to save were taking His life in the blindness of their own selfishness--taking the life of Him who was without a spot or blemish of sin. Yes, dark indeed was that hour. And as Jesus gave up the ghost, the power of good seemed to have lost its eternal battle. The noblest soul that had ever lived had been overcome by sinful man. How could ordinary man ever hope to triumph?

But, oh, the difference on that first Easter morn when those glorious words were first heard, "He is risen from the dead"! The cruel cross, the symbol of defeat and shame, became the symbol of triumph and beauty. The forces of love had broken the

bonds of selfishness and greed and death. Sin had been overcome by the untold suffering of a Savior who died of a broken heart. Through suffering and pain came victory. One died for all.

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes are we healed." (51)

Explain what happened, I cannot. I can only say that where defeat once faced the life of man in his struggle to overcome his lower nature, through the triumph of the suffering Son of God, victory now awaits him. Now he may cry out joyfully with Paul, "O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? - - - -but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (52)

Jesus achieved the supreme good of turning evil into good. No one standing by that cruel cross would have ever concluded that it was best that Christ should die that way. Only God and Jesus, Himself in Their infinite love, could see that only through vicarious suffering could love triumph over sin. And it necessarily follows that if we too share in His victory we must share His sorrow. We must take up our cross and follow Him. Through our own suffering perhaps we may be able to show others the way.

Any doctrine of Theism would not be complete without a belief in immortality. Otherwise there would be many people suf-

(51) Isaiah 53:5.

(52) I Corinthians 15:55-57.

fering pain in the world that are entirely unrewarded. Those that do good seem often to have the hardest time, while the wicked prosper. The claim of Theism is that after death the proper reward goes to each man. Each is judged on the basis of how he has made his talents grow in the service of God. We are assured of immortality through Jesus Christ who has overcome the grave and can, therefore, bear his followers across the stream of Death. In the words of Whale:

"The resurrection is a mighty act of God, strange to all experience, inscrutable to all science, repudiated and sometimes ridiculed by much that is considered the best intellect and finest culture of our day; but to those who believe the astounding fact and bring it to the test of life, sharing in the fellowship not only of Christ's suffering, but also His triumph--here is the real solution to the problem of evil. It is real because it springs out of life and has been tested and vindicated there by uncounted generations of faithful men. Moreover, Christians are not sentimentalists, living in a world of phantasy where wish is the father of the thought. We know well enough that we still sin, suffer, and die; the fragmentariness and pain of life is not taken away; we do not yet see these things put under our feet. But we see Jesus crowned, with a victory in which we already share and which death itself cannot touch." (53)

In our conquest of evil we do not battle alone as we struggle

(53) Whale, Christian Answer to the Problem of Evil. p. 73.

ever onward. We are fellow workers with God. We can feel the strength of the Almighty within us in the power of His gracious love. What joy is ours as we say with Paul,

"I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

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